February 17, 1987

Dear Don,

Thanks for your letter of January 19th. It was nice to hear from you. My holidays were very nice, very low key. I took 12 days off from work starting with Christmas eve and it was wonderful. I stayed around home, took care of domestic chores, potted plants, read, wrote letters, visited some art exhibits in Balboa Park, and had several friends over for dinner. It was very restful and over too soon

Just because 1986 had been such pure shit, I approached the new year as if things would automatically be different (and better) because we had all turned a page on the calender. With full awareness of the irrationality of that mindset I still thought that a new attitude would do me good. But I began to wonder when on January 6th I got a speeding ticket on 30th street less than ½ mile from my house on my way to work. Damned radar! Then, that same week, on the way home from work an old man driving a 1976 Mercury rear ended me in freeway stop-and-go traffic, totaling my 14-year-old Datsun. No one was hurt. And although my car was totaled (ripples in the roof, rear gate caved in, whole right side bowed and buckled) it was still driveable.

After a month of hassles with insurance companies, auto salespersons, and the credit union, I took delivery of a new Nissan Maxima station wagon on February 10th. It is loaded--the first luxury car I've ever owned--power everything...I'm still learning how to operate it. With payments of $396/month, I've decided to give up my apartment and move into the car...if only it had a microwave oven. I'm trying to sell some stamps and art work so I'll be able to do something other than <u>sit</u> in the car on my days off. I had been toying with the idea of a new car for over a year, but medical expenses and other clamities last year made that seem very unlikely. So finally, my hand was forced and in spite of all the hassles, it may turn out to be for the best.

Good news about my job! It has finally become permanent, albeit with some changes. We are merging some aspects of Quality Assurance and Utilization Review and my duties will be changing this week. New challenges for Jess.

There haven't been any major changes in my health status. I still have chronic herpes (with rare respite) either either oral or sacral. The sinusitis has been with me for more than 2 years now, necessitating a lot of sniffling, throat-clearing, and expectorating. The biggest problem related to the sinusitis, however, is the hearing loss due to inability to clear my eustachian tubes. Flying is pure hell.

I continue to test positive for shigella. I was encouraged in early January when one stool culture was negative. I thought it was a fluke because I was still having intermitten abdominal cramps, diarrhea and/or urgency. So it was no surprise when a recent culture was positive. I will be seeing an infectious disease specialist soon to be re-evaluated and see if anything can be done.

Fatigue and night sweats come and go. But I still run 3 miles a couple times a week and do just about anything else that I want to do. So I count my blessings and feel pretty positive most of the time.

You stated that Fran had postponed a trip to San Diego due to not feel-

ing well. I sure hope that she is feeling better by now. Please tell her to let me know when she is going to be down here. I'd love to see her. My home phone is 619-280-7411 and I am most easily reached after 4 PM daily and anytime on the weekends.

While typing this letter, I got a phone call from Frank Stiriti regarding my upcoming Safe Sex Lecture that I will be doing this week at Vulcan Steam & Sauna. He remains a sweetheart. We had a long conversation. When I mentioned that I was in the process of writing a letter to you, he asked all about you, wanted to know what was going on with you, and sent his best wishes.

Fifi (Jane) has been working in Washington, D.C. and Charleston, South Carolina for most of the past year. She's gotten a big promotion and has become responsible for planning the installation of 800 Department of Defense hospital & clinic computer systems. She has to work within an 800 million dollar budget, poor thing. She seems to be working herself silly and wants to return to San Francisco. She's a bright lady, and I admire her talent.

Are you planning to attend the National Gay March on Washington in October of this year? I think it should be a very worthwhile event and may just fit very well with my long-postponed plans to visit family and friends on the east coast. Start planning and saving now, Don. You and I are among the people who have spent much of the last 15 years of our lives making such an event possible and we should be among the folks who show up there to make our collective voices heard. Let me know your thoughts on this.

I hope that by now your hand has healed well. Take care of yourself, wear your rubbers, and take your vitamin pills.

My love to you,